

This week's community profile: Isaar



Picking a peck-plus: Cucumber growers harvest their crop on land rented from Kay and Frank Schuh

of Isaar. Makeshift huts throughout the field are used as rest areas from the sun.

They're in a 'pickle' in big way

By Karil Van Boxel

Press-Gazette

ISAAR — It's summer here — time to harvest cucumbers.

Isaar, on Outagamie County VV about 16 miles west of Green Bay, was established by German farmers.

The farms are still here, although many have been passed down to children whose parents have retired.

Press-Gazette photos by Ken Behrend

Kay and Frank Schuh, County VV, rent 150 acres, which is used to raise cucumbers. The work is back-breaking in the hot summer sun, but families from as far away as Appleton pick the "pickles" to sell to Vlastic Foods in Bonduel.

The Schuhs provide a grading operation and Frank's son, Mike, trucks the produce to the factory at night.

"It's a beautiful crop this year; the best we've ever had," said Kay Schuh, who has been in the pickle business 11 years.

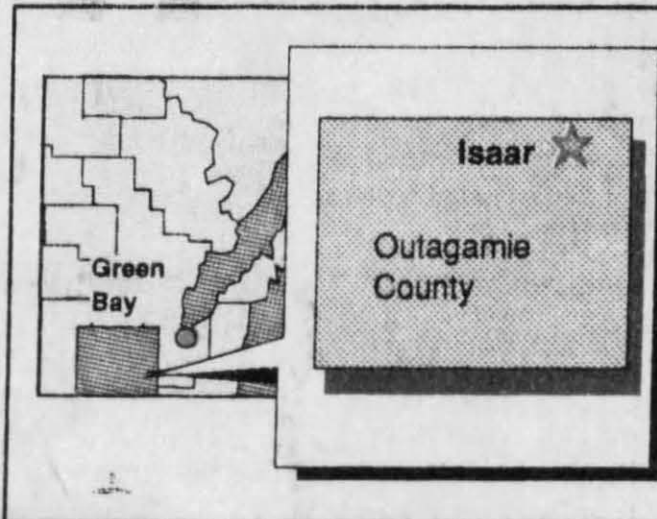
Carl Eisenreich, W2001 County VV, sold the family farm 18 years ago after working it for half a century. Now 66, he is the maintenance man at St. Sebastian Catholic Church, where his wife Rosalie, 65, is church secretary.

A lifelong member of the church, Eisenreich was a trustee for 27 years. "There aren't too many weddings in this church we aren't invited to," he said.

St. Sebastian, on County VV, will celebrate its 100th birthday in 1996. The Rev. Dave Ashbeck, 49, said 190 families are in the parish. Many are young people.

"I have far more baptisms and weddings than funerals," he said.

Ashbeck, who also is a counselor in Green Bay, said church members work together on events such as the annual pancake-porkie supper in March.



The Isaar file

- **Population:** About 50.
- **Like home:** The community is believed to be named for the Isaar River in Germany by farmers who settled here. The Rev. Dave Ashbeck says Isaar has German, Dutch and Irish descendants.
- **Patron saint:** The local church is named for St. Sebastian, a Roman army captain who became a follower of Christ. St. Sebastian was shot with arrows for helping Christians escape persecution. Jan. 20 is his feast day.

David and Margaret Schuh, N9351 Isaar Road, gave up farming when their business, Schuh Construction Co., took off. Now three of their four children also are involved. Among their projects is Comfort Suites in Green Bay.

"For me, it's a must," David Schuh, 48, said of rural life. "I work every day in the city in plants and mills."

Margaret, 47, grew up in the Flintville area. "There's more peace and quiet," she said of the country.

Long-established businesses still thrive. Isaar Cheese Inc. has been in the Ullmer family for 41 years in a factory built in 1917.

Dean Ullmer, 48, grew up in the family business. He and wife Patricia, 44, purchased it in 1978.

Longhorn colby is their specialty, but they still make cheddar, which also provides cheese curds, Monterey jack and semi-soft. About 2,800 pounds of cheese are made each day from 28,000 pounds of milk. Work begins at 12:30 a.m.

"They can get a bargain if they want to right from the factory," Patricia Ullmer said. Cheese is sold to grocery stores in Pulaski, Seymour and Suamico, but most goes to brokers in the Midwest.

Ding's Back tavern across the street

once had a dance hall and grocery store. Owner Arnold Vanden Eng, 50, wants it returned to supper club status. Today he runs it as a neighborhood bar offering hot dogs and burgers.

A sawmill was at the site before the bar was built, Blossom Mueller, 69, said. Her parents owned the bar when she was a child.

Provimi Veal Corp. with 150 workers is the largest employer. It slaughters and processes 1,500 bull calves averaging 250 pounds and processes 500 lambs per day, Marv Mainville, general manager said.

Mainville, 44, of Ashwaubenon, said the work starts early, a hold-over from the days when there was no refrigeration. Veal is shipped to the East and West coasts and exported to Europe and Japan.

Music teacher Grace Ullmer, 70, was the church organist for 48 years. She canned more than 400 quarts of vegetables last summer and recently put up 25 quarts of pickles. Husband Elmer has a large garden again.

"We're not retired," she said. "We're just tired."

■ **Next week:** Pine Grove in Brown County



Cooling it: Patricia and Dean Ullmer store cheese in a cooler at Isaar Cheese Inc.



Chat: Rosalie Eisenreich, St. Sebastian Church secretary, talks with husband Carl, church custodian.